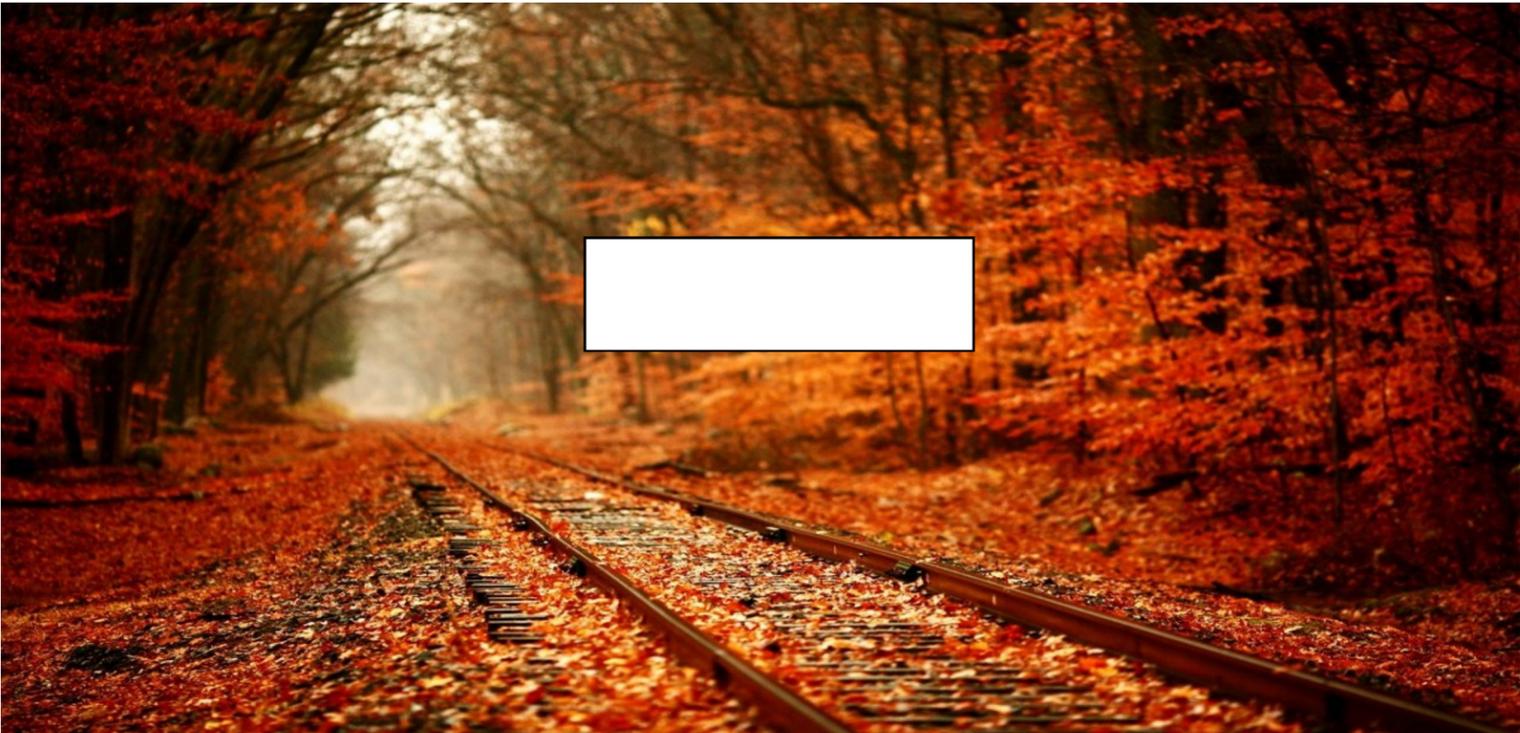


STAMP



The Vine

Dear Church Family,
 Hope you are all doing great and enjoying God's blessings.

Thanksgiving is upon us and we will be doing Thanksgiving dinner boxes again this year to donate to folks who are in need. If that's something you would like to be a part of we are taking donations like stuffing, potatoes, rolls, turkeys, canned veggies, olives, butter, pies etc. We would appreciate anything. Youth Group will be delivering the boxes Wednesday, November 25th.

Also, we are doing Operation Christmas Child. You can come by the church and pick up your shoebox and a brochure with all the information and details. Operation Christmas Child is an effective ministry, these shoeboxes go to children all over the world. We have an opportunity to tell these kiddos about Jesus and His love for them. Please bring your shoeboxes to the church no later than Sunday, November 22nd. Thank you and God bless!

Find us: 
ccemmett.org 365-0991
info@ccemmett.org
Get our app!  
 *Send Prayer Requests
 *Listen to Sermons
 *Watch Video
 *Stay Connected
 *Share With Friends
 *and much more!

Our gift to you! Sign up now.
rightnow MEDIA
ccemmett.org/rightnow





One night I was sitting in my home office working on my study for Sunday morning when my cell phone rang. When I picked it up, I heard the words I had feared for many years, “Pastor Raul, Ryan is in trouble. He is acting crazy, taking so many drugs and he is completely out of it. We are all worried about him.”

Ryan was in Panama City, Panama, with the professional skateboarding team he managed and it seemed his life had finally spiraled beyond his control. I was so far away, but I knew he did not need me to be there. He needed Jesus. He needed a face-to-face encounter with the Lord. Only Jesus could save him from himself and the self-destructive path he had been on for nineteen years.

I got on my face and I prayed for my son, my youngest child. I asked the Lord to reveal Himself to Ryan in such a way that he would not be able to deny Him. I called my wife, Sharon, and together we interceded for Ryan’s life.

As I reached out to the Lord, I thought back on my own life. My older sons, Raul Jr. and Shane had been born during my wild days in the world, but they were walking with the Lord. Ryan had come later, after I had given my life to the Lord. He never experienced the anger and violence I was not able to contain on my own. Instead, he was raised in a Christian home with a pastor for a father, but he chose the world and walked away from Jesus.

When I came to the Lord, my life changed dramatically. Right away God called me to go into the high schools to proclaim His name, and I was obedient. As hard as I opposed God as a heathen, I embraced Him and wanted to serve Him after I gave my life to Him. God was faithful; my wife and sons had been attending church and were happy to see the changes God made in my life. It seemed as if the Lord was restoring the years the enemy had stolen from me and my family.

When Sharon found out she was pregnant, we were shocked and amazed. We could not believe God was going to bless us with another child. I felt like God was giving me a chance to do things right. This child would never see and experience my wrath. I would raise him to the Lord and he would serve God.

When Ryan came, we were so happy. He was a good baby and a happy child. As he got older, I took him and his brothers with me when I traveled to preach the gospel. Ryan even got to meet the King of Tonga. God was using my life and I was blown away. It seemed like everything was perfect.

I did not realize that Satan had already gotten his hands on Ryan. When he was in first grade, he was exposed to pornography. He was at school with some friends and they found a duffel bag filled with hard core porn magazines. Although he was too young to understand the images he saw, when he saw a porn video in fourth grade, the images stuck in his mind. By the time he reached seventh grade, he had a desire to experiment with sex.

All this was happening in his life and we never knew it. We thought he was just a happy kid who hung out with his brothers. We had no idea sexual sin had taken root in his young heart.

By the time Ryan was in high school, he was running wild. On Saturday nights, I would be out on the streets until all hours of the morning looking for him. Then I would get up Sunday morning to teach the Word of God. It was a nightmare for me and my wife. All we could do was pray. Nothing we said had any effect on him. He just kept getting wilder, doing crazier things and taking more drugs.

For nineteen years, Ryan ran from God. For nineteen years, Sharon and I loved him and were on our faces before the Lord, praying for the life and soul of our youngest son. No matter what I did when I was in the world, nothing prepared me to watch my son put his life in the hands of Satan. I had to hang onto the faithfulness of God and the knowledge God loved Ryan more than Sharon and I did. God had a plan for Ryan and He could change his heart.



When Jesus is being accused of casting demons out by the power of Satan, Jesus responds with these words, “If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand” (Mark 3:24-25). In other words, if Jesus were in league with the Devil, He wouldn’t cast demons out. Jesus here is speaking a truth that He knows well. Jesus knows about a united house, for the Son is the second person of the Tri-unity. His house knows perfect unity. God’s purposes always flourish because in God’s house there is no division. Father, Son and Spirit have always only worked in harmony.

However, since Adam and Eve, people have been at odds with this unified house. Adam chose his own wisdom over his Creator’s, and we have all followed suit—each of us like straying sheep, seeking to build our own house—our own kingdom. It amazes me that God’s love is so great that the Son would then come to this earth to make His abode with us, yet even here He was busy about His Father’s house (Luke 2:49). In the verses leading up to Jesus speaking about a house divided, his earthly family thought Jesus was out of His mind and sought to seize Him (Mark 3:21). Jesus, who is united with His Father, lived in a family that knew discord on the earth. He experienced the disunity of our claustrophobic kingdoms of one. His own earthly home was divided.

Jesus then goes on to speak about His house (family). He asks a question, “Who are My mother and My brothers?” (Mark 3:33). He answers that those who do the will of God are My family (Mark 3:35). In other words, My family is united with Me. There is something profound happening here. When we put our faith in Christ, we experience faith union with Christ. He unites us with Him, thus we have the Spirit of adoption crying out, “Abba” (Romans 8:15). In fact, Jesus assures us before His death that “In My Father’s house are many rooms...I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2).

By this adoption into His house, we experience the Trinitarian life! Through Christ we are united with God, and we are united to one another. This is a wonder too deep for us to grasp! Read the book of Ephesians and you will see this mystery leap off the pages! Paul says that our corporate union with Christ is the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10).

This is why it is so grievous when the body of Christ, whether locally or universally, is divided. A house divided against itself cannot stand. Imagine with me what it would look like for our churches to so love the unity of our Father’s house that we would love one another. Just like within a family where two siblings do not need to agree on what type of music they like, yet they do agree on who their parents are and who their siblings are.

We are called to walk in the unity that was forged on the cross. If you are like me, you can probably think of relationships that are in discord. How can we pursue unity in the church? This question confronts our own hearts that seek to build our own houses. This is that horrid sin nature. If judgment begins at the household of God (1 Peter 4:17), then we should seek to be a household united for the glory of the Father. I cannot change your heart. You cannot change my heart. But we can all pray with the psalmist, “Unite my heart to fear Your name” (Psalm 86:11).